

U.S. Postal Employees Deserve Our Applause

3-13-86

Once in awhile we read in the papers that the U. S. Postal Service has found and delivered a lost letter dating back many years. An item from Nebraska weeks ago really caught my eye — an Omaha woman had just received a birth announcement postmarked 51 years ago.

Bad publicity for the Postal Service?

A postal official with whom I talked doesn't think so. "When editors consider such incidents as oddities rare enough to print, I think this only emphasizes the day-to-day efficiency of the system."

By and large he's probably right. I'd say the 744,490 postal employees — over 50 percent of whom are clerks, mail handlers, carriers and drivers — deserve a salute for the good service we get and have come to expect in all kinds of weather.

There are exceptions, of course. But we must realize that an organization which sorts and delivers mountains of mail with such dispatch is going to make some mistakes, lose some mail at least temporarily, and experience breakdowns in service.

Consider this: In the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 1985, the Postal Service handled 140,098,000,000 pieces of mail! This is just one of the interesting statistics I gleaned from the postmaster general's annual report.

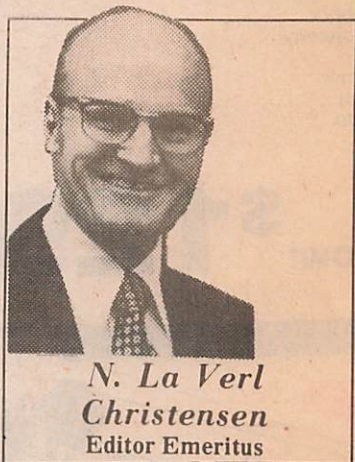
An inscription on the Main Post Office in New York City, adapted from Herodotus, Greek historian in the fifth century B. C., symbolizes the service ideal of the postal department:

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

You might call this a sort of rallying motto — but generally speaking it's also a statement of fact, despite service inconsistencies freely admitted by Postmaster General Albert V. Casey and constructive criticism from the public.

Actually Americans in general obviously think highly of the Postal Service. Reports Casey: "Once again, an independent poll found the public ranked the Postal Service highest among 14 services in terms of 'value for the dollar.' The public also gave us the highest favorable rating among 12 federal departments."

This statistic from a department bro-



**N. La Verl
Christensen**
Editor Emeritus

chure is exceedingly impressive in terms of prompt service: "Despite problems in early 1985 due to airline deregulation, the rate of overnight delivery of first-class mail rose to 96 percent."

As you probably are aware, the Service is run as a private sector corporation. It is administered by an independent board of governors and operates on its own revenue. It has not received a government appropriation since fiscal 1982, according to the department fact sheet.

Casey reported a \$251 million deficit for fiscal 1985. "This brought the Postal Service to within one percent of breaking even."

A few more statistics to think about:

In its farflung operation, the department delivered mail to 73,765,006 households last year, averaging 589 pieces per capita ... It cost \$117 per capita to run the Service and 19.8 cents to handle each piece of mail in 1985.

Beverly Burge, public information officer at Salt Lake City, says the 22-cent price of the basic postal product — the first-class stamp — still remains a first-class bargain, lower than charged in most industrialized countries.

Ms. Burge and Kenneth C. Jorgensen, customer services manager for the Provo Post Office, rounded up the reports and other information helpful to me in writing this piece. I appreciate their courtesy and diligence.

Litton

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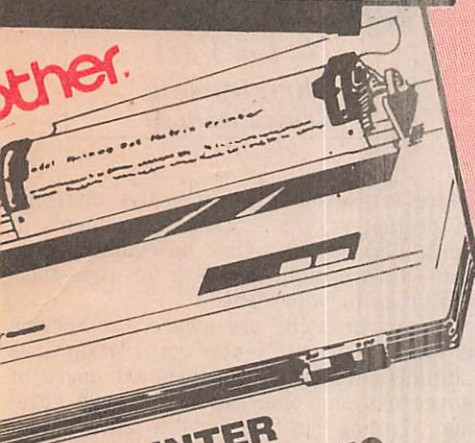
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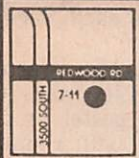
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U.S. Postal Service reorganizing in effort to increase efficiency

3-22-86

In a move to increase efficiency, the U.S. Postal Service announced Friday a reorganization of operations across the country that will mean managerial changes and staff reductions in Utah and surrounding states.

Beverly Burge, Postal Service spokeswoman in Salt Lake City, said the reorganization is designed to increase efficiency by concentrating greater managerial responsibility closer to the public.

Under the old system, orders from Washington, D.C., filtered down through five regional offices that, in turn, passed the information to the 42 postal districts. The new program, which takes effect March 29, will reduce the regional staff and merge the districts into 74 quasi-autonomous divisions.

Burge said the increasing local control will allow division managers more power to decide such things as construction of new post offices and should also help the Postal Service compete with other mail carriers.

But, she said, cost-cutting is also an objective and some reduction in postal employees is anticipated, although it is uncertain where those cuts will be made.

"There won't be a lot of changes in mail service," said Burge. "Those basic things will remain very much the same. We hope we are just more responsive to customers and act more quickly on problems that may occur."

The reorganization will mean job shifts for Western Slopes district manager David Bakke and Salt Lake City Postmaster William Kobus, whose jobs have been eliminated. Bakke will become the division manager in Phoenix, but Kobus has yet to find a new home. Burge said, however, that Kobus' talents should soon land him a job elsewhere with the Postal Service.

Dennis J. Yuhl, manager of the Rocky Mountain district in Denver, will assume duties as the division manager in Utah and will oversee operations in Utah, Montana, Idaho and portions of Oregon and Nevada.

In a press release, Albert Casey, U.S. Postmaster General, said the reorganization would enable the Postal Service to become more responsive and service-oriented.

"While there may be some dislocation in the short term, the Postal Service believes these changes could do much to revitalize us as an institution and enable us to move ahead to better serve all parts of our nation," he said.

Thursday, April 10, 1986

19 post offices plan to burn midnight oil

Nineteen post offices around the state will be burning the midnight oil Tuesday in an effort to accommodate tax time procrastinators.

Postal Service General Manager Dennis Yuhl says taxpayers will have until midnight to file their tax returns and still get the April 15 postmark.

Tuesday's late night hours will be in effect at the following locations in the Salt Lake area: Main Post Office, 1760 W. 21st South; Holladay, 2350 Arbor Lane; Downtown Station, 350 S. Main; South Salt Lake, 3161 S. West Temple; Sugar House Station, 2155 Highland Drive; Murray, 4989 S. State St.; Sandy, 8850 S. Seventh East; Bountiful, 750 S. Main St.; and West Jordan, 18th W. 78th South.

In Ogden, Tuesday's midnight hours will be in effect at the following locations: Main Post Office, 3680 Pacific Ave.; the Town Station, 2641 Washington Blvd.; and the Ben Lomond Station, 510 Washington Blvd.

Midnight collection is also available at post offices in Cedar City, Logan, Price, Provo, Richfield, St. George and Vernal.

Utah postmasters want Postal Service to retain monopoly on 1st-class mail

20 April 1986
MOAB — Utah postmasters are urging the retention of laws that give the U.S. Postal Service the exclusive rights to first-class mail.

In their 50th annual convention, the Utah postmaster members of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States unanimously supported a resolution calling for retention of the private express statutes.

Walter Borla, Helper postmaster, association newsletter editor, said Saturday the laws, which give the Postal Service exclusive rights for first-class mail except some overnight mail, also allow for universal postal system and rates.

Several private organizations have urged Congress to repeal the laws, thus allowing private companies to handle first-class mail.

"Our contention is that if private companies take over delivering first-class mail some could probably deliver a letter from Salt Lake to Ogden for 15 cents, but who would take it to Helper, Vernal, Gunlock, Monticello or Blanding," he said.

The organization, which includes most of the state's 192 postmasters, also passed another resolution calling for the budget appropriation commonly referred to as "revenue foregone."

Borla said this appropriation allows

for preferred rates to newspapers and nonprofit mailers, free rates to the blind and for book rates. The rates for these don't cover the cost of handling, so Congress makes a special appropriation to pick up the difference.

The Reagan administration supports the abolition of the "revenue foregone" appropriation.

The postmasters also stressed their opposition to a clause in the tax reform bill that would add additional income taxes to the annuities of future civil services retirees.

Borla said the proposal would tax any income drawn from the federal retiree's retirement fund on the first day of retirement. He said that taxes are paid on the money when it is deposited, so the postmasters feel the change would constitute double taxation.

In organization elections, Laurie Holley, Tropic, was named president. Elected to serve with her were Ellen Clark, Newcastle, vice president, and Barbara Hopes, Elberta, secretary-treasurer.

State directors named to represent their areas were Sherm Larson, Brigham City; James Chatwin, Farmington; Ray McQuivey, Roosevelt; Ernest Maes, Sandy; Judith Hardgrave, East Carbon; Renee Albrecht, Bicknell; and Gertrude Bowler, Gunlock.

Pipe Bomb Explodes in Mailbox

By LISA MOTE
Herald Staff Writer

3 June 1986

A pipe bomb exploded in a mailbox in northwest Provo this weekend shooting a piece of metal across the street and over one lot into the back yard of the next home.

Belle Cluff, 1235 N. 1500 West, Provo, said the bomb went off at about 11:30 p.m. Sunday, waking her family and many of the neighbors with the noise and vibration.

"This place was swarming last night with really angry people," she said. The bomb exploded in the mailbox, which was enclosed in a rock structure. Rocks were thrown into the street and yard.

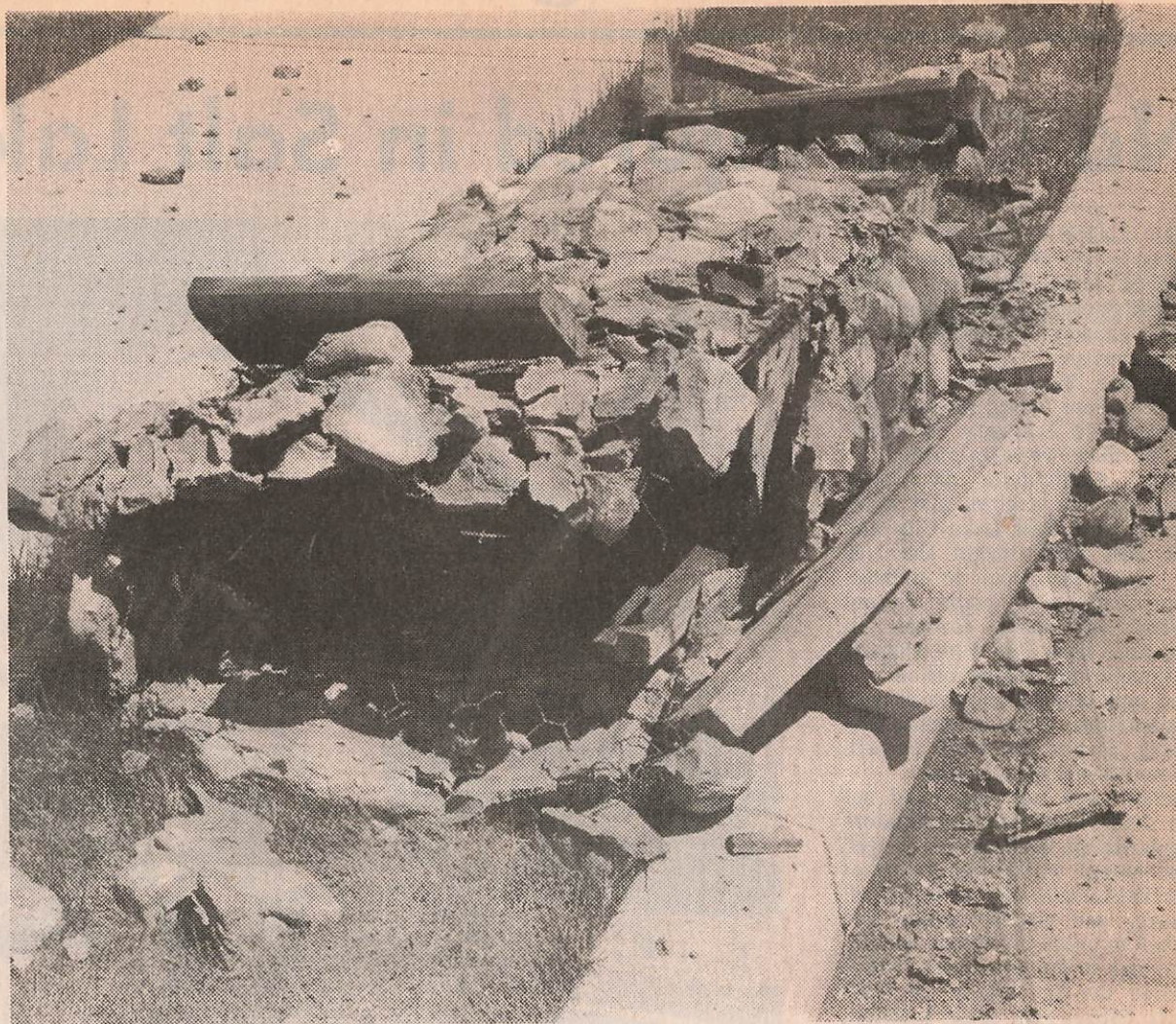
In addition, the mailbox door flew across the street and over two fences into the back yard of David Anderson. "We were sleeping upstairs when we heard it clanging around."

His children were sleeping outside, but he and his wife brought them inside after a "good-sized chunk" of the mailbox landed near the patio where the children were sleeping.

"This is a strolling area with people passing the mailboxes all the time," Anderson said. "If someone passes when a bomb goes off, 'it could kill somebody.'"

He said he also heard the explosion about a month ago when someone set a bomb off in another neighborhood mailbox.

Provo Police Chief Swen Nielsen said pipe bombs have not been a problem except recently in Provo. Those who set the bombs off are usually young people who "thing it's hilarious and don't think of any damage beyond the mailbox.



Dennis Patterson Photo

The scene at a Provo curbside where a pipe bomb exploded Sunday night.

"It's scary. Most kids have no idea of the power of various types of explosives. It's something we're probably more concerned about than people realize," Nielsen said. But because the evidence is destroyed by the bomb, pipe bomb

cases are hard to solve.

The primary danger with pipe bombs is the debris — either from the mailbox or fragments of the bomb — which can cause damage

depending on its velocity.

"I don't think it's funny," Cluff said. "All the parents in this town ought to know what their children are doing Sunday nights. Somebody could have been hurt."

Post Office to offer Freedom Festival operation

22 June 1986

A special Freedom Festival Postal Station will be operated by the Provo Post Office from June 23 to July 5.

The station will be located at the corner of University and Center Streets at the Tabernacle Park. Stamps and philatelic or stamp collecting items will be available for sale and postal clerks will also be taking orders for the Statue of

Liberty stamps that will be available July 5.

Provo Postmaster Robert H. Vunder said one of the most unique items the station will offer is a special cancellation featuring the Statue of Liberty. "Because pictorial cancellations are each different, and each one is offered for only a short period of time, they often become collectors' items,"

he said. This special pictorial cancellation is unique to Provo and will be available only from June 23 to July 5. Postmaster Vunder said the cancellations are free but letters or other items must have

first-class postage affixed in order to receive the mark.

Also available will be the Official Centennial Seal of the Statue of Liberty.

New postal designs get stamp of approval

17 Sep 1986
WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Service says the designs on new stamps it will issue in the next several months will range from a portrait of philanthropist John Harvard to a design with the greeting, "Love You, Mother!"

The service said Tuesday that for this year's Christmas stamps, pictured will be a snowy winter village scene and the "Perugino Madonna."

Each will be regular 22-cent, small stamps. They will be issued officially on Oct. 24 and be available nationwide the next day.

The contemporary Christmas drawing, designed by Dolli Tingle of Westport, Conn., will be issued at Snow Hill, Md., the artist's ancestral home.

The Madonna and Christ child design was taken from an oil-on-wood painting that hangs in the National Gallery in Washington, where the issuing ceremony will be held.

The original was painted by Pietro Di Chris-

toforo Di Vannucci, who, born near Perugia, Italy, was better known as "Il Perugino."

Today, at a Cambridge, Mass., ceremony on the campus of the university he endowed and which bears his name, the Postal Service issues a 56-cent stamp bearing a portrait of 17th century American colonist and philanthropist John Harvard. That stamp will pay for 3 ounces of first-class mail.

"Love You, Mother!" is the legend that appears on a 22-cent stamp to be issued next year as part of a booklet of 20 "Special Occasions" stamps.

There will be eight different designs, including special stamp for fathers, birthdays and general greetings, such as "Congratulations" and "Thank You."

Navajo blanket designs will be featured on a block of four stamps being issued Thursday at the Navajo Nation Fair in Window Rock, Ariz.

The blankets pictured on the stamps hang in

the Museum of the American Indian in New York City and the Lowe Art Museum in Coral Gables, Fla.

A 3-cent stamp honoring cardiologist Dr. Paul Dudley White will be issued Sept. 15 in Washington during the Tenth World Congress of Cardiology.

White was born in Roxbury, Mass., in 1886. He embarked on a lifelong study of the heart and circulatory system following the death of his sister from rheumatic fever.

White is recognized as "The Father of American Cardiology," and the Washington conference is dedicated to his honor.

He gained public prominence in 1955, following President Eisenhower's collapse from a heart attack when White became spokesman for the medical team treating the president and used the opportunity to educate the nation on the risks of heart disease.



The 1986 Christmas stamp features Di Vannucci's "Perugina Madonna" and will be issued officially on Oct. 24

Post Office asking for building bids

2-4-87

The U.S. Postal Service is asking for bids for a new post office in Provo.

According to Provo Postmaster Robert Vunder, bidders are being asked to offer terms for construction of a 64,000 square foot, one-story facility on the southwest corner of 900 South and 250 East.

The Postal Service will own the building, which will house about 110 postal employees, plus machines needed to process mail for ZIP Code areas 845, 846 and 847.

The new building will also give customers an additional place to rent post office boxes, purchase stamps use other postal services.

Construction offers will be received until Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. at the U.S. Postal Service Facilities Service Center, 850 Cherry Ave., San Bruno, CA 94099-0320.

The existing post office at 95 W. 100 South will continue to be used, and will offer full retail and post office box services.

Expect higher stamp prices by March — but better service, too, postal official says

By Bruce Hills
Deseret News staff writer

8-23-87

Americans should expect first-class stamps to jump to 25 cents by next March, more Postal Service automation and better mail service, says Assistant Postmaster General Frank S. Johnson Jr.

In Salt Lake City to meet with local postal officials, Johnson said the Postal Service, under new Postmaster General Preston R. Tisch, has embarked on a program to build a customer satisfaction program second to none.

Johnson, who is director of communications for mail service, said division managers and marketing directors are being asked to make customer satisfaction a priority at the local level.

"We want them to spend more time with customers and listen to what they have to say. We want to develop specific programs that help solve our retail customers' problems."

He said some of these programs include the availability of stamps by mail and telephone, mobile postal vans and consumer telephone answer lines. The traditional Saturday mail service will continue.

"We want to improve the looks and convenience of our post offices to make every contact with every customer a pleasant and professional encounter."

Post office lobbies will have improved vending equipment, computerized window units and more attractive surroundings. "By February, we expect to have modernized 18,000 retail window units nationwide, and we hope to increase that number to 55,000 by 1990."

Johnson said the new program is designed to increase productivity, make lines shorter and give more accurate and consistent window service.

He said the Postal Service has contracted with a private air carrier to supplement its existing network of commercial flights by linking metropolitan areas through a distribution hub at Terre Haute, Ind.



Frank S. Johnson

One of Johnson's jobs, he said, will be to tell the public how they can help improve their mail service by using ZIP codes and the extra four digits to speed their mail and by making addresses easy to read.

"In New York City, nearly half of the mail on every given day is misaddressed or inadequately

addressed."

He said first-class mail service costs Americans a lot less than those living in other nations. For instance, a first-class letter costs more than 46 cents in Italy, 45 cents in Germany, more than 42 cents in Japan and 40 cents or more in Norway and Austria. The same service costs more than 35 cents in The Netherlands, France and Belgium and more than 30 cents in Switzerland and Sweden.

"First-class mail costs more than 28 cents in the United Kingdom and 26 cents or more in Canada and Australia."

Johnson said the Postal Service is a \$30 billion business. "We're one of the largest companies in the world with 800,000 employees in 39,000 locations. Annually, we process 150 billion pieces of mail.

"We are really the heart of American business. Some 94 percent of all mail is business mail. First-class mail represents only half of the mail. Third-class mail, including advertisements both addressed and not addressed, amounts to 37.4 percent of the mail. The rest includes second-class mail — newspapers and magazines — and fourth-class parcel post packages."

Some people call it junk mail, but that is a misnomer when it comes to the value of bulk business mail. "Twenty cents out of every dollar paid to employees comes from bulk business mail revenues. In fiscal 1986, bulk business mail accounted for more than a third of total mail volume, an increase of 5 percent from the preceding year, and produced \$5.6 billion in revenue."

Automation is important, not to eliminate postal workers' jobs, but to keep the Postal Service from having to hire thousands more, Johnson said. "Some 83 percent of the costs of running the mail service are manpower costs."

He said new high-speed sorting equipment, for instance, can help speed the mail and reduce the number of people who have to handle it.